

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND THE EGERTON COMMITTEE REPORT

DEAR SIR,

Please permit me as an "Old Boy" of the Institute to offer you my sincere congratulations for your masterly review of the working of the Institute and suggestions for its improvement. Focussing public and Governmental attention on the Institute is not merely timely, but national interest demands that nothing should be left undone to preserve the unique character of the institution as a centre of research and scientific activities. It has already contributed scientific personnel who hold positions of importance in Universities, Industries and Government organisations throughout India. In spite of many defects the Institute still occupies a prominent, if not the premier, position in the country as regards scientific activity. You have drawn attention to the lack of a well-defined policy as repeatedly pointed out by the four Reviewing Committees, and have commendably avoided controversial matters. One cannot help feeling that the Government of India must share part of the responsibility for the prevalent unsatisfactory state of affairs by taking away (I won't say 'enticing away') for example, the Director at a time when the Institute was at its lowest ebb in the matter of staff. It almost amounts to criminal negligence that the authorities have allowed several departments to run and students admitted without making adequate provision for teaching. A large number of professorial chairs are still without occupants, and this has been going on for several years. Is it too much to hope that the Governing Body and the Government of India at least now will take immediate steps to consolidate the existing departments before adding new ones?

The practice of *inviting* applications for the posts of Director and Professors seems to be *infra dig.* These should be *offered* to eminent men who should consider it an honour to serve the Institute. The terms of appointment should be sufficiently elastic and free from red tape. It is better that a few mistakes are committed rather

than that good work is hampered by red tape. In this connection it is pertinent to recall the illuminating remarks made by His Excellency Sri Rajagopalachari, the Governor-General of India, in the course of his Convocation Address to the Delhi University, which he delivered early this year (15-1-49). His Excellency declared:

"Where, in accordance with democratic ideas, we have adopted the procedure of election for filling positions requiring expert qualifications, to which appointments were made in the old days by authority, it is necessary to create an atmosphere which would attract the offer of such services by the most capable and high minded among us. We have seen how those who are best qualified to serve in civic administration stand aside, disliking the vexations attendant on election procedure and leaving third and fourth rate men to manage the affairs of local bodies as best as they can. The same fate should not be allowed to overtake our universities. I hope that these remarks of mine, which deal with a matter of very great and growing importance in many of our affairs, will be understood in the spirit in which I have uttered them."

As an "Old Boy" may I also suggest the filling up of a gap in the Institute? This is the provision of a Guest House for the use of vacation and short time workers. I have in mind the example of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole. A number of people especially from the Universities would like to spend their vacations more profitably by taking advantage of the facilities which the Institute can easily provide. They could consult the library, attend short summer course lectures, or scientific discussions arranged by the different departments and even carry out some valuable work which cannot be done in their own institutions.

Yours faithfully,
M. R. NAYAR.

Lucknow University,
July 7 1949.